

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the preceding amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim 1-8 and 10 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 5 and 10 are amended, and claim 9 is cancelled. Claims 1 and 5 are independent claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 4 and 7-9 include allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including allow limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In light of this indication and the telephone interview conducted with Examiner Hasan on July 24, 2006, which is detailed below, claim 9 has been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 5.

Telephone Interview

A telephone interview was conducted between the Applicants' representative and Examiner Hasan on July 24, 2006. During the telephone interview, Examiner Hasan agreed that incorporating dependent claim 9 into the independent claims would not raise new issues requiring further search and/or consideration. Examiner Hasan also indicated that a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) was not necessary and that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 would be entered on the record.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 1-3, 6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Watanabe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5, 255,935), and claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § Watanabe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,255,935) in view of Watanabe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,661,834).

As discussed above, the allowable features of dependent claim 9 have been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 5, thereby rendering the all of the prior art rejections moot.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections to claims 1-3, 6 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the objections and rejections and allowance of each of the pending claims of the present application is earnestly solicited.

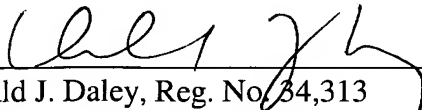
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone listed below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESS, DICKY, & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By


Donald J. Daley, Reg. No. 34,313

P.O. Box 8910
Reston, Virginia 20195
(703) 668-8000

DJD/SAE:ame